

United States District Court
Eastern District of Louisiana



Opening a Civil Case / Filing a Complaint

October 2009

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Opening a Civil Case / Filing a Complaint

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A. Introduction

This document will guide you through the process of opening a civil case in ECF, docketing the complaint or other initiating document, paying the filing fee (if applicable) through Pay.gov, and service of process. It also explains that a judge will be assigned to your case after you have successfully opened your new civil case and filed your complaint and, when applicable, issuance of electronic summons for service of process.

A registered ECF user may electronically file the following initiating documents for a civil case:

- Complaint
- Notice of Removal
- Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus (28:2254)
- Petition for Writ of Mandamus
- Petition Pursuant to 28:2241
- Petition to Enforce IRS Summons
- Petition to Perpetuate Testimony
- Registration of Foreign Judgment

The following initiating documents for a civil case must continue to be filed on paper at the clerk's office:

- Application for Stay of Execution
- Motion to Quash Administrative Summons or Subpoena
- Motion to Quash an IRS Subpoena or Application to Enjoin under 12 U.S.C. § 3410 (Customer Challenge cases)
- Sealed Complaint

Miscellaneous civil initiating documents must also continue to be filed on paper at the clerk's office, including:

- Letters Rogatory or Letters of Request
- Motion to Quash or Compel Foreign Subpoena
- Motion to Quash or Enforce Grand Jury Subpoena

A user should have the following available before starting the civil case opening process:

1. The complaint (or other initiating document) saved in Portable Document Format (PDF). The civil cover sheet and any accompanying document(s), including exhibits, and completed summons, when applicable, should be saved as separate PDF documents. A 5 MB size limit applies to each PDF file.

2. A valid credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, Diner's Club) to pay the filing fee (if applicable).

Questions concerning electronic civil case opening should be directed to the ECF Help Desk at 1-866-209-7767, or 504-589-7788, during business hours.

Case opening occurs in two phases:

- In phase one, the information from the civil cover sheet and the parties to the case are entered, prompting a case number to be generated automatically. A case shell consisting of this information is created which will become the docket sheet.
- In phase two, the case opening document is filed, a link is created between the filer and their attorney, and the filing fee is paid (if applicable). This case is not considered opened until both phases are completed.

Please note that for quality control purposes, the clerk's office reserves the right to review and modify the selections made by attorneys to accurately reflect the information contained within the filings.

B. Opening a Civil Case

To file a new civil case using ECF, log into the system and select **Civil** on the main menu bar. See Figure 1.



Figure 1

Under Open a Case, click on the link **Civil Case**. See Figure 2.

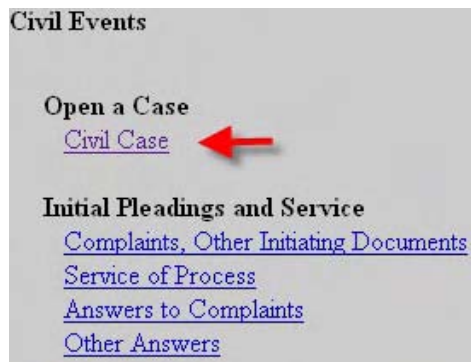


Figure 2

Review the opening message. Because of the complexity of civil case opening, this screen provides the help desk telephone number in case assistance is needed at any time during this process. The help desk is available during the court's normal business hours. The screen also informs the filer that the case initiating document must be filed on the same date that the case is opened. Click **Next** to continue. See Figure 3.

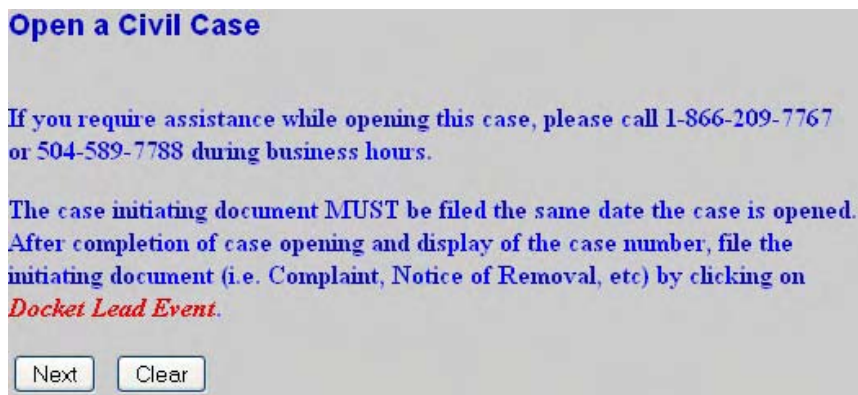
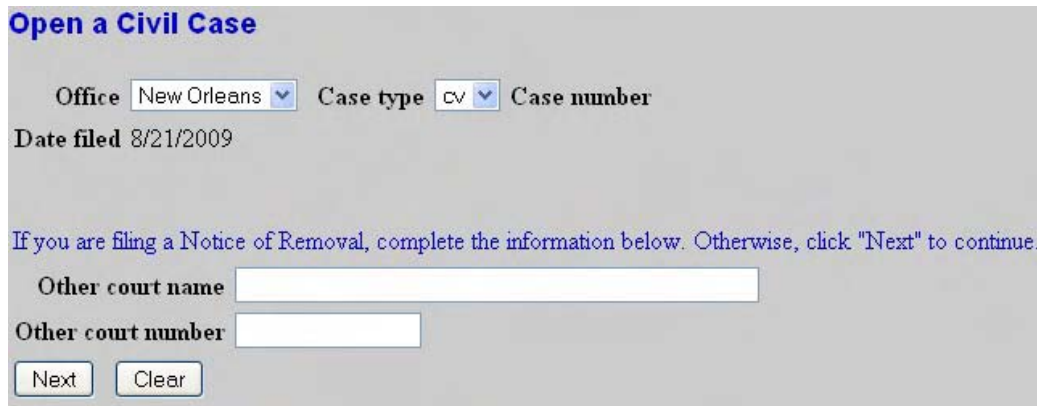


Figure 3

The **Open a Civil Case** screen appears. This screen provides the system with the information needed to later assign a case number. See Figure 4.

- The **Case type** field is set as 'cv'.
- The **Case number** will automatically be generated after phase one is completed.
- The **Date Filed** field defaults to the present date and cannot be changed.
- **Other court information** refers to state court cases removed to federal court. When filing a Notice of Removal, in the **Other court name** field, enter the name of the court the action is being removed from, for example, 24th JDC, Jefferson Parish. In the **Other court number** field, enter the case number of the state court, for example, 123,456 "B".

Continue by clicking the **Next** button.



Open a Civil Case

Office Case type Case number

Date filed 8/21/2009

If you are filing a Notice of Removal, complete the information below. Otherwise, click "Next" to continue.

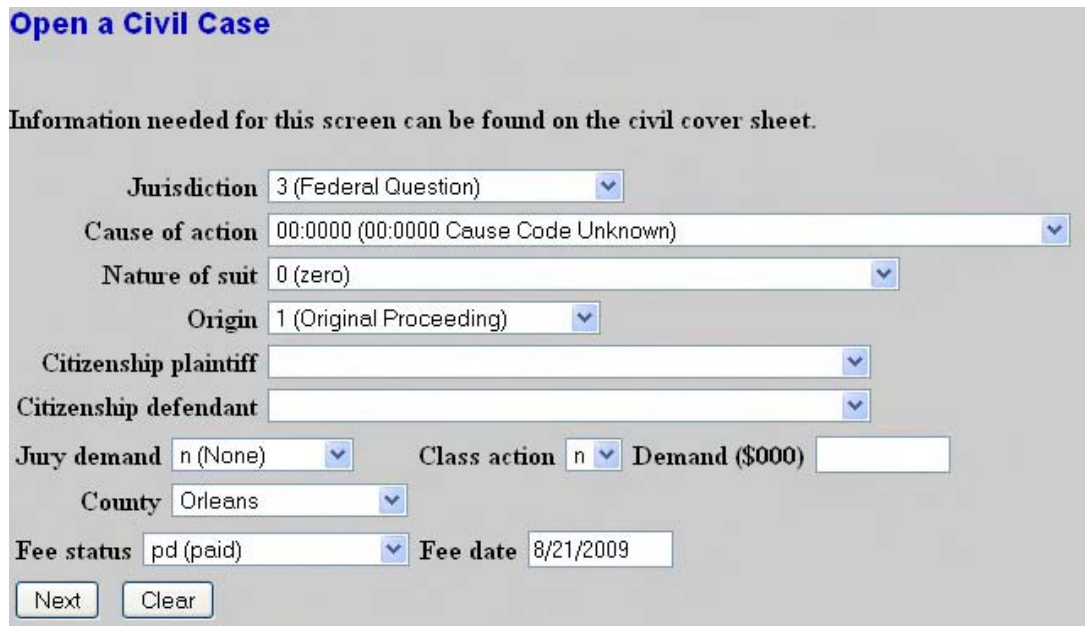
Other court name

Other court number

Figure 4

C. Entering the Civil Cover Sheet Information

Most of the information required to complete this screen is found on the civil cover sheet. Selections are very sensitive. Jurisdiction, cause of action, and nature of suit codes are three key pieces of information that must correlate with one another. See Figure 5.



Open a Civil Case

Information needed for this screen can be found on the civil cover sheet.

Jurisdiction 3 (Federal Question) ▼

Cause of action 00:0000 (00:0000 Cause Code Unknown) ▼

Nature of suit 0 (zero) ▼

Origin 1 (Original Proceeding) ▼

Citizenship plaintiff ▼

Citizenship defendant ▼

Jury demand n (None) ▼ **Class action** n ▼ **Demand (\$000)**

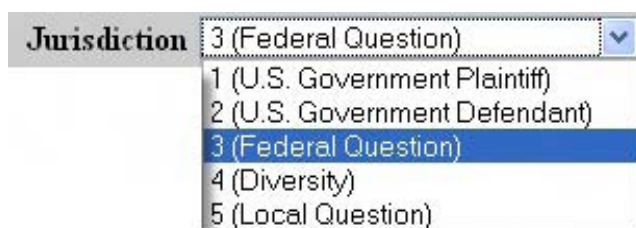
County Orleans ▼

Fee status pd (paid) ▼ **Fee date** 8/21/2009

Figure 5

Select the **Jurisdiction** code. If there is more than one basis for jurisdiction, select the basis for jurisdiction by giving precedence in the following order. See Figure 6.

1. U.S. Government Plaintiff
2. U.S. Government Defendant
3. Federal Question
4. Diversity of Citizenship
5. Local Question - **This option is not currently used. Do not select this option.**



Jurisdiction 3 (Federal Question) ▼

- 1 (U.S. Government Plaintiff)
- 2 (U.S. Government Defendant)
- 3 (Federal Question)
- 4 (Diversity)
- 5 (Local Question)

Figure 6

Select the **Cause of action** code from the drop down list. Codes are listed in alphabetical order with a brief description in parentheses. See Figure 7.



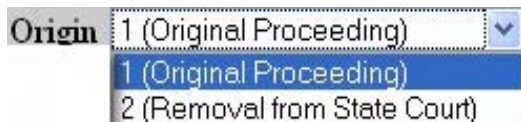
Figure 7

Select the **Nature of suit** code from the drop down list. Codes are listed in alphabetical order with a brief description in parentheses. See Figure 8.



Figure 8

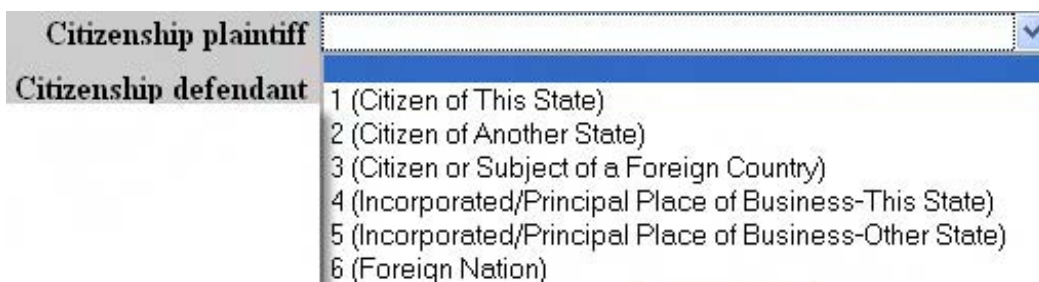
When entering an **Origin** code, select 1 (Original Proceeding) for a new case originating with a Complaint, or 2 (Removal from State Court) for a Notice of Removal. See Figure 9.



The screenshot shows a dropdown menu labeled "Origin". The menu is open, displaying two options: "1 (Original Proceeding)" and "2 (Removal from State Court)". The first option is currently selected and highlighted in blue.

Figure 9

If jurisdiction is based on diversity , enter both **Citizenship plaintiff** and **Citizenship defendant** codes. Select the appropriate code for the **first** named plaintiff and the **first** named defendant. See Figure 10. Otherwise, skip this step.

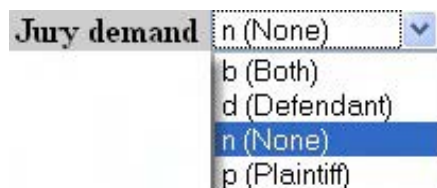


The screenshot shows two dropdown menus. The first is labeled "Citizenship plaintiff" and the second is labeled "Citizenship defendant". The "Citizenship defendant" menu is open, displaying a list of six options: "1 (Citizen of This State)", "2 (Citizen of Another State)", "3 (Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country)", "4 (Incorporated/Principal Place of Business-This State)", "5 (Incorporated/Principal Place of Business-Other State)", and "6 (Foreign Nation)". The first option is currently selected and highlighted in blue.

Figure 10

Jury Demand should only be selected if there is a jury demand stated within the case opening document that you are filing. See Figure 11.

- N (none) should be selected if the document being filed does not state a jury demand.
- P (plaintiff) should be selected if the document being filed is a complaint and it contains a jury demand.
- D (defendant) should be selected if the document being filed is a notice of removal and it contains a jury demand by the defendant.



The screenshot shows a dropdown menu labeled "Jury demand". The menu is open, displaying five options: "n (None)", "b (Both)", "d (Defendant)", "n (None)", and "p (Plaintiff)". The first option, "n (None)", is currently selected and highlighted in blue.

Figure 11

The **Class Action** field requires a 'yes' or 'no' selection and defaults to 'n.' If you are requesting a class action, change the **Class Action** field to 'y.' Otherwise, leave as 'n.' See Figure 12.

A screenshot of a web form field labeled "Class action". The field is a dropdown menu with a small blue arrow icon on the right. The menu is open, showing two options: "n" (selected) and "y".

Figure 12

If a specific dollar amount is demanded in the complaint, that number should be rounded to the nearest thousand and entered in the **Demand** box. For example, \$500,000 would be entered as 500; \$98,370 would be entered as 98; and \$131,900 would be entered as 132. See Figure 13.

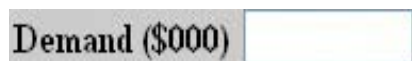
A screenshot of a web form field labeled "Demand (\$000)". The field is a text input box with a light gray border and a small blue arrow icon on the right.

Figure 13

In the **County** box, select the parish of residence of the **first named plaintiff**. Review the original complaint, or if filing a notice of removal, the state court complaint, to locate this information. The parishes are listed in alphabetical order. The default is set to Orleans and should be changed if applicable. See Figure 14.

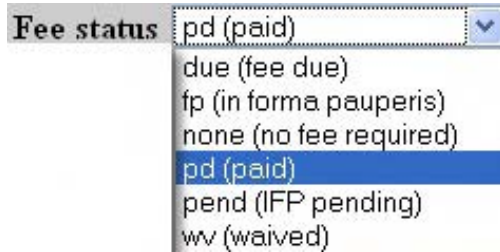
- If the plaintiff resides outside the state of Louisiana, select Out of State.
- If the plaintiff is a resident of another country, select Out of Country.
- If the United States is the plaintiff, enter the parish of the first named defendant.

A screenshot of a web form field labeled "County". The field is a dropdown menu with a small blue arrow icon on the right. The menu is open, showing a list of Louisiana parishes: Orleans, Iberia, Iberville, Jackson, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, La Salle, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Morehouse, and Natchitoches. The "Orleans" option is selected.

Figure 14

Leave the **Fee Status** field to 'paid' unless you are (1) a U.S. governmental agency, (2) filing in forma pauperis, or (3) a seaman pursuant to 28 USC 1916. See Figure 15.

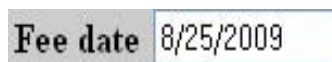
- If a motion to proceed in forma pauperis is being submitted, 'IFP Pending' should be selected.
- 'Waived' should be selected if the United States is submitting the filing.
- If the case is filed as a seaman pursuant to 28 USC 1916 and the filing fee is not paid at this time, 'Fee Due' should be the appropriate status.



A screenshot of a web form showing a dropdown menu for the 'Fee status' field. The menu is open, displaying several options: 'pd (paid)', 'due (fee due)', 'fp (in forma pauperis)', 'none (no fee required)', 'pd (paid)' (highlighted in blue), 'pend (IFP pending)', and 'wv (waived)'. The label 'Fee status' is to the left of the dropdown.

Figure 15

The **Fee date** field defaults to today's date and should never be changed. See Figure 16.



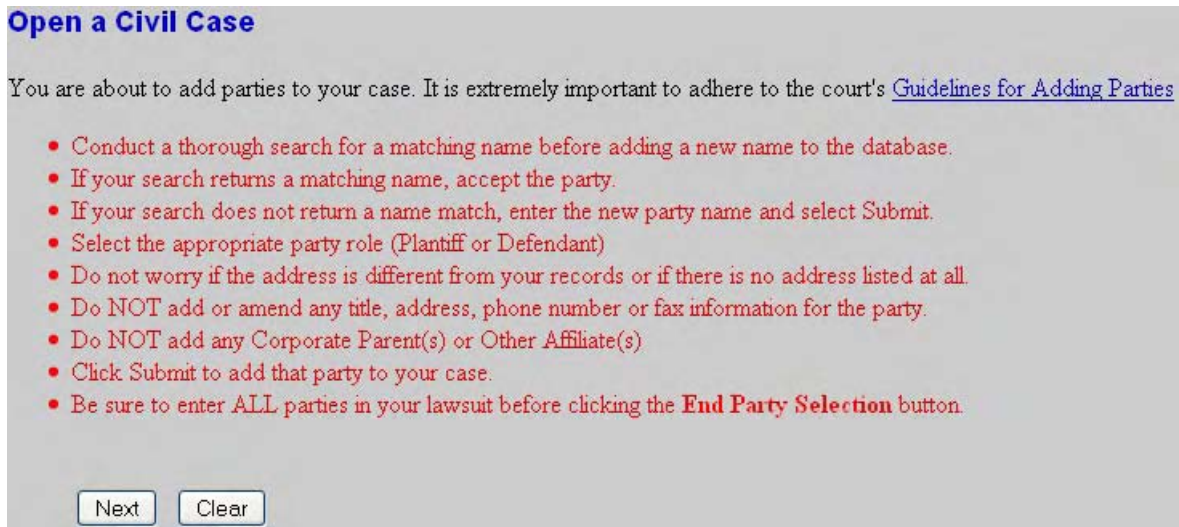
A screenshot of a web form showing a text input field for the 'Fee date'. The field contains the date '8/25/2009'. The label 'Fee date' is to the left of the input field.

Figure 16

Verify that all information entered on this screen is correct. When you click the **Next** button, the ECF system will verify the accuracy of the jurisdiction, cause of action, and nature of suit combination. If an invalid combination is selected, an error message will appear. Click the **Next** button to continue.

D. Adding Party Information

You are about to add parties to your case. It is extremely important to adhere to the court's **Guidelines for Adding Parties**. To view complete instructions for adding parties, click on the hyperlink to the guidelines at any time. The most important steps to follow are noted on the screen. After reading this screen and reviewing the guidelines, click the **Next** button to continue. See Figure 17.



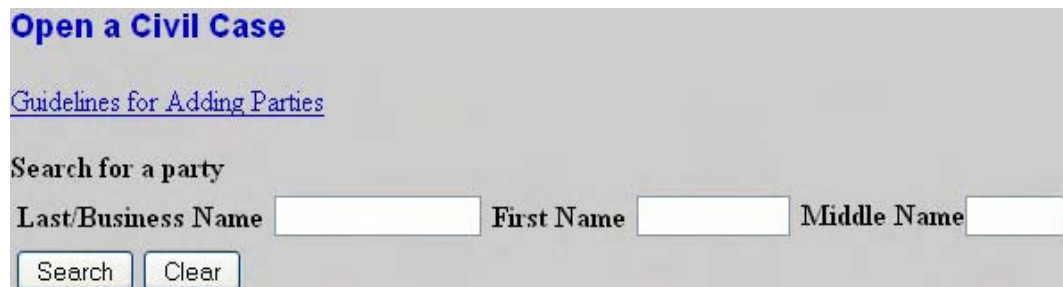
Open a Civil Case

You are about to add parties to your case. It is extremely important to adhere to the court's [Guidelines for Adding Parties](#)

- Conduct a thorough search for a matching name before adding a new name to the database.
- If your search returns a matching name, accept the party.
- If your search does not return a name match, enter the new party name and select Submit.
- Select the appropriate party role (Plaintiff or Defendant)
- Do not worry if the address is different from your records or if there is no address listed at all.
- Do NOT add or amend any title, address, phone number or fax information for the party.
- Do NOT add any Corporate Parent(s) or Other Affiliate(s)
- Click Submit to add that party to your case.
- Be sure to enter ALL parties in your lawsuit before clicking the **End Party Selection** button.

Figure 17

The **Search for a Party** screen appears. This screen allows you to add parties to the case one at a time. You will loop through this process adding all plaintiffs first and then all defendants. Notice the hyperlink **Guidelines for Adding Parties**. To review instructions for adding various types of party names, click on the link. You may print these instructions to have available while searching and adding parties. See Figure 18.



Open a Civil Case

[Guidelines for Adding Parties](#)

Search for a party

Last/Business Name First Name Middle Name

Figure 18

For each party you must first conduct a party name search of the database. If the party has previously been involved in litigation in this district, the name will already exist in the ECF database. To minimize the number of duplicate names in the database, it is best to search for and use an existing name, rather than automatically creating a new party.

Always start with a broad search and narrow it down by entering more of the party name if the results are too voluminous.

Party Name Search Hints:

- You must enter at least two consecutive letters or characters of a party's name.
- The search is not case sensitive. For example, you can enter Smith or smith.
- The name may have been abbreviated when it was added to the database, especially state names.
- A wild card (*) is not required at the end of a search string. You can enter a wild card before the letters, if desired, to take the place of other letters. For example, you can enter "*am" and find Bob Cunningham and Judy Amstutz but not Dick Armstrong since the letters are not consecutive.
- Try alternate searches if your first search is not successful. Be sure the name you are searching for is not already in the database before you add it.

Search individuals by entering the last name and the first initial of the party's first name. See Figure 19.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Search for a party". It contains three input fields: "Last/Business Name" with the text "Lincoln", "First Name" with the text "A", and "Middle Name" which is empty. Below these fields are two buttons: "Search" and "Clear".

Figure 19

Search for businesses by entering the first word of the name (with the exception of 'A' or 'The'). For example, the name The Home Depot is entered as Home Depot. After entering the party name as instructed, click **Search**. See Figure 20.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Search for a party". It contains three input fields: "Last/Business Name" with the text "Presidents", "First Name" which is empty, and "Middle Name" which is empty. Below these fields are two buttons: "Search" and "Clear".

Figure 20

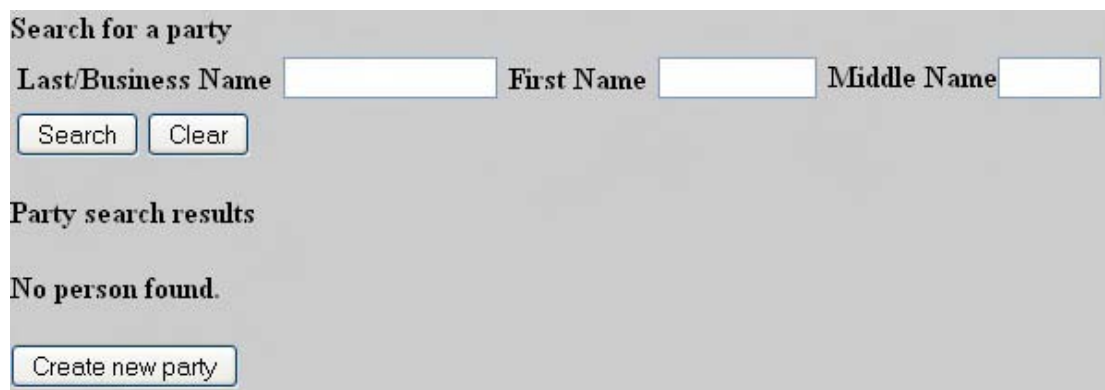
If the search results display a name that is a match to the party, click on it to highlight the name and then click on the **Select name from list** button. See Figure 21.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Search for a party". It contains three input fields: "Last/Business Name", "First Name", and "Middle Name". Below these fields are "Search" and "Clear" buttons. Underneath is a section titled "Party search results" which contains a scrollable list box. The list box has two items: "Presidents Corp" and "Presidents Insurance Co LLC", with the second item highlighted in blue. At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Select name from list" and "Create new party".

Figure 21

If the search results do not find a name that matches the party to your case or if you see the message "No person found," click the **Create new party** button. See Figure 22.



The screenshot shows the same "Search for a party" form as Figure 21. However, the "Party search results" section now displays the text "No person found." instead of a list box. The "Create new party" button remains at the bottom.

Figure 22

When creating a new party, be sure to add the complete name in the appropriate fields at the top of the screen. Remember to refer to the 'Guidelines for Adding Parties' for specific instructions, such as: required fields, use of proper capitalization and punctuation. For individuals, fill out the first name, middle name, and generation fields, if applicable. Do not enter the name in all caps. Do not use the Title field. See Figure 23.

Party Information

Last name	Washington	First name	Ronald
Middle name	G	Generation	

Figure 23

Next, you must select a role type. Click in the **Role** field. See Figure 24.

Party Information

Last name	Washington	First name	Ronald
Middle name	G	Generation	
Title			
Role	Selection Required (selreq:pty)		

Figure 24

The types are listed in alphabetical order. After locating the appropriate type, select it by clicking on it. See Figure 25.

Role

- Selection Required (selreq:pty)
- Interpleader Defendant (intpld:pty)
- Interpleader Plaintiff (intplp:pty)
- Intervenor (intv:pty)
- Intervenor Defendant (intvd:pty)
- Intervenor Plaintiff (intvp:pty)
- Material Witness (mw:pty)
- Mediator (med:pty)
- Movant (mov:pty)
- Objector (obj:pty)
- Petitioner (pet:pty)
- Plaintiff (pla:pty)**
- Receiver (rc:pty)
- Respondent (rcs:pty)

Figure 25

If you selected a party that has an address associated with it, please do NOT make any changes. This information does not appear on the docket sheet. You are looking for a name match, not a particular person. Do NOT fill out address, phone, or fax fields for any party. See Figure 26.

Figure 26

If the party you are adding requires additional identifying information, enter it in the **Party text** field. For example, 'Individually and as surviving spouse,' or 'Individually and in his official capacity.' See Figure 27.

Figure 27

The start date should remain as defaulted. Do not change the **Start date** field. See Figure 28.

Figure 28

E. Entering an Alias

If a party has an alias that is identified in the document, (i.e. dba, aka) click the **Alias** button. See Figure 29.

A screenshot of a software interface showing a row of buttons: 'Alias...', 'Corporate parent or other affiliate...', and 'Review...'. A red arrow points to the 'Alias...' button. Below these buttons are 'Submit', 'Cancel', and 'Clear' buttons. To the right of the buttons is a text box containing the instruction: 'Add all aliases, corporate parents and other affiliates before clicking the Submit button.'

Figure 29

Search for the alias name the same way all parties are searched. In the **Last/Business Name** field, for individuals, enter the last name. For companies, enter the first word of the name (with the exception of 'A' or 'The'). Then click the **Search** button. See Figure 30.

A screenshot of a form titled 'Search for an alias'. It contains a text field labeled 'Last/Business Name' and two buttons below it: 'Search' and 'Clear'.

Figure 30

Search results are displayed. If the search results display a name that is a match to the party, click on it to highlight the name and then click on the **Select name from list** button. If the search results do not find a name that matches the party to your case or if you see the message “No person found,” click the **Create new alias** button. See Figure 31.

A screenshot of the same 'Search for an alias' form as in Figure 30, but with search results displayed. Below the 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons is a section titled 'Alias search results' containing a list box with the following items: 'Allstate Financial Services', 'Allstate Insurance Company', 'Allstate Insurance Company of Maryland', and 'Allstate of North America'. At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'Select name from list' and 'Create new alias'.

Figure 31

After either selecting a matching name or creating a new name, either complete the rest of the name or verify the name on the **Alias Information** screen. Next, select the alias type by clicking on the **Type** field. See Figure 32.

Choose the appropriate type:

- agent (agent of, one acts for another)
- aka (also known as)
- dba (doing business as)
- fdbba (formerly doing business as)
- fka (formally known as)
- nee (born - placed before a married woman's maiden name)
- obo (on behalf of)
- other (an alias of a role not otherwise listed)
- rpi (real property in interest)
- ta (trading as)
- unkn (unknown)

Alias Information (Party Allstate of North America,)

Last/Business name	Allstate Finances Inc.	First name	
Middle name		Generation	
Type	agent	Start date	8/26/2009

The Type dropdown menu is open, showing the following options: agent, aka, ca, dba, fdba, fka, nee, obo, other, rpi, ta, unkn.

Figure 32

The start date should remain as defaulted. Do not change the **Start date** field. See Figure 33.

Start date 8/26/2009

Figure 33

After completing the Alias Information screen, click the **Add alias** button. See Figure 34.

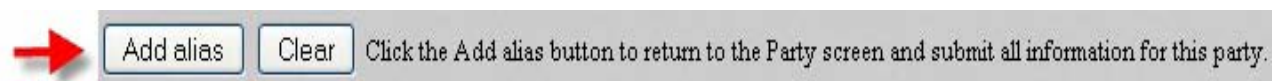


Figure 34

The system returns to the **Party Information** screen. See Figure 35 for the bottom of this screen.

If you had to add an additional alias for this party, you would do so by clicking the **Alias** button again.

Do not add a corporate parent or other affiliate at this time. You will add these, if necessary, when docketing a Statement of Corporate Disclosure.

The **Review** button allows you to check data you entered to see the party and any alias information that has been added.

After verifying that all of the information is complete, click the **Submit** button.

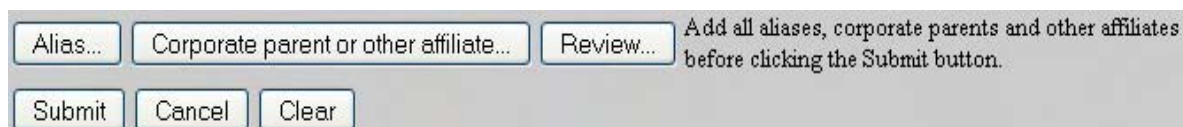


Figure 35

The system displays the **Search for a Party** screen. Complete the same steps outlined above to add all other parties to the case. Be careful to select the appropriate role for each party (i.e. plaintiff, defendant). After adding **ALL** parties to the case, click the **End party selection** button. See Figure 36.

Figure 36

F. Filing a Complaint

Once the **End party selection** button is clicked, the case number will be assigned. See Figure 37.

You have just completed Phase 1 of the case opening process. The case shell consisting of the civil cover sheet information and party information is now complete. Please make a note of the case number for future reference.

WARNING: Even though your case number has been assigned, you are not finished the case opening process. The case opening process is incomplete until you docket your complaint or other initiating document and pay any required filing fee. The case initiating document must be filed the same day the case is opened.

You may not use the browser back button to make corrections or additions. If you did not add all parties to the case before the case number was assigned, you may add additional parties in the next step when filing the complaint, or other initiating document.

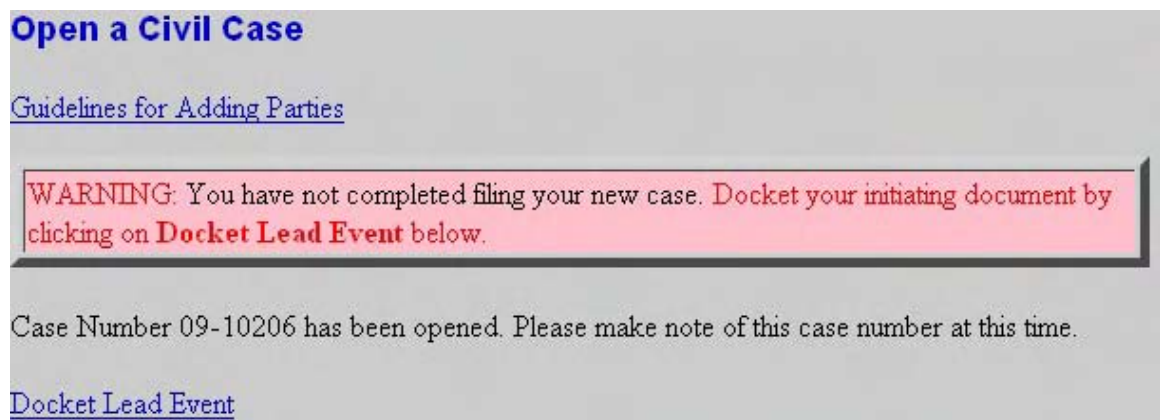


Figure 37

Click on the **Docket Lead Event** hyperlink to file the complaint or other initiating document. See Figure 38.

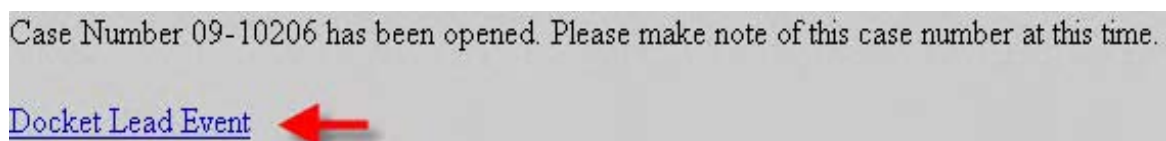


Figure 38

The case number is pre-filled for you since you clicked on the **Docket Lead Event** hyperlink. Click **Next** to continue. See Figure 39.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Complaints and Other Initiating Documents" in blue text. Below the title, there is a label "Civil Case Number" in bold. Underneath this label is a text input field containing the value "2:09-cv-10206". At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "Next" and "Clear".

Figure 39

The case title is displayed. Verify the case number and case title. Click **Next** to continue. See Figure 40.

The screenshot shows the same web form as Figure 39. Below the "Civil Case Number" field, the case title "2:09-cv-10206 Washington v. Lincoln" is displayed in blue text. The "Next" and "Clear" buttons remain at the bottom.

Figure 40

A list of possible initiating events appears. From the **Available Events** list, select the applicable initiating document event by clicking on it (e.g., Complaint, Notice of Removal). The selected event will appear in the **Selected Event** box. Click **Next**. See Figure 41.

The screenshot shows the web form with a list of "Available Events" on the left and a "Selected Event" box on the right. The "Available Events" list includes: Complaint, Notice of Removal, Petition Pursuant to 28:2241, Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus (28:2254), Petition for Writ of Mandamus, Petition to Enforce IRS Summons, Petition to Perpetuate Testimony, and Registration of Foreign Judgment. The "Complaint" option is highlighted in blue. The "Selected Event" box contains the text "Complaint". At the bottom, there are "Next" and "Clear" buttons.

Figure 41

Select the party **filing** the initiating document. If a complaint is being filed, the plaintiff would be selected here. For a Notice of Removal, you would select the defendant filing the removal. If there are multiple filers, you can select more than one party by holding down the [Ctrl] key while clicking each applicable filer. You will notice the link **Add/Create New Party**. If you did not add all parties earlier in the case opening process, you may add them now by clicking on this hyperlink. Be sure to select the appropriate party role type. For assistance with entering party names, click on the link **Guidelines for Adding Parties**. Select the filer(s) and click **Next**. See Figure 42.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents
2:09-cv-10206 Washington v. Lincoln

[Guidelines for Adding Parties](#)

Select the Party:

Lincoln, Abraham [Defendant]
Washington, Pearl [Plaintiff]

[Add/Create New Party](#)

Figure 42

After selecting the filer, an association between the attorney electronically filing the document and the party they represent is made. Since you are filing the complaint on behalf of the plaintiff, this association should be created. The box to the **left** of the name AND the **Notice** box are automatically checked. The **Lead** box should only be checked by the lead attorney. If you are performing the role of lead attorney, check the Lead box. If you are not the lead attorney, do not check the lead box. Additional attorneys listed on the document will be added by the Clerk's Office during their review. Click **Next**. See Figure 43.

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The following attorney/party associations do not exist for the above case(s).

Please check the box on the left of the screen for associations which should be created.

If the association should *not* be created, be sure the box is *unchecked*.

☒ Pearl Washington (pty:pla) represented by attorney (aty) ☐ Lead ☒ Notice

Figure 43

You now need to select the party as to whom the filing is **against**. For both filing a Complaint or a Notice of Removal, select the defendant(s). Do not select any 'group' radio button. Click **Next**. See Figure 44.

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Complaints and Other Initiating Documents" with a sub-header "2:09-cv-10206 Washington v. Lincoln". The main instruction is "Please select the party that this filing is **against**." Below this, there are two columns. The left column is headed "Select the Party:" and contains a scrollable list with "Lincoln, Abraham [Defendant]" and "Washington, Pearl [Plaintiff]". The right column is headed "Select a Group:" and contains four radio button options: "No Group" (which is selected), "All Defendants", "All Plaintiffs", and "All Parties". To the right of these options is a link "Add/Create New Party". At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Next" and "Clear".

Figure 44

At this point, you need to browse and find the PDF document of the complaint and required attachments. Click the **Browse** button. See Figure 45.

The screenshot shows the same web interface as Figure 44, but with additional information. Below the party selection section, there is a red heading "ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED:" followed by two red bullet points: "(1) Civil Cover Sheet, and" and "(2) If you are requesting that Summons be issued, file the completed Summons as an additional attachment." Below this, there is a text prompt "Select the pdf document (for example: C:\199cv501-21.pdf)." followed by a "Filename" label and a text input field. To the right of the input field is a "Browse..." button. Below the input field is a label "Attachments to Document:" followed by two radio button options: "No" (which is selected) and "Yes". At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Next" and "Clear".

Figure 45

A pop-up box will appear. Navigate to the appropriate folder containing the PDF document(s) you wish to file. Right-click on the initiating document and select the option to open the document in Adobe Acrobat. This allows you to preview the document to ensure you have selected the correct file. (Remember, once submitted, a document cannot be edited.) Select **Open with Acrobat** to verify you have selected the correct document. See Figure 46.

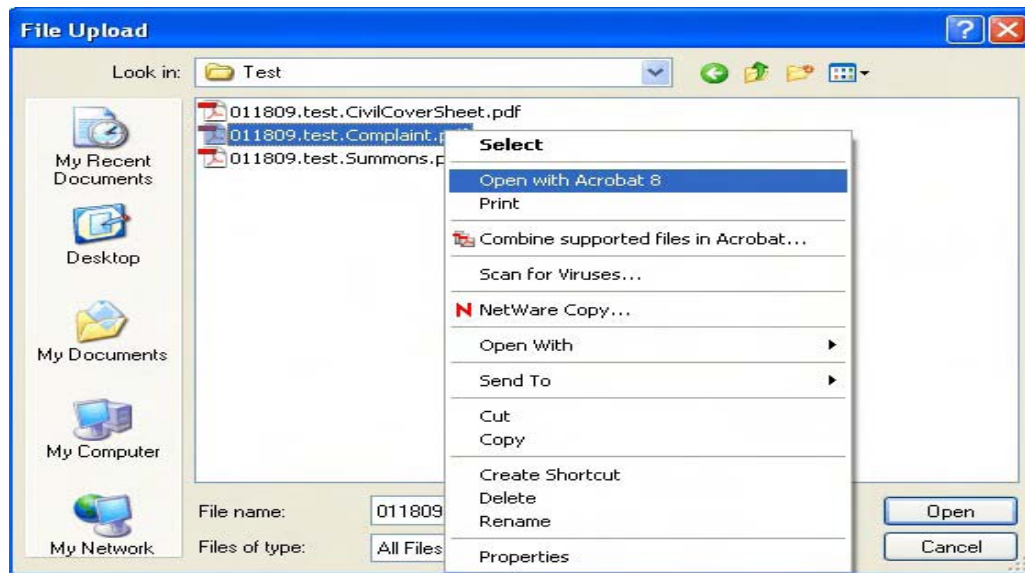


Figure 46

After verifying you have selected the correct PDF document, close the Adobe Acrobat Reader, and then click **Open** to accept the PDF for filing. See Figure 47.

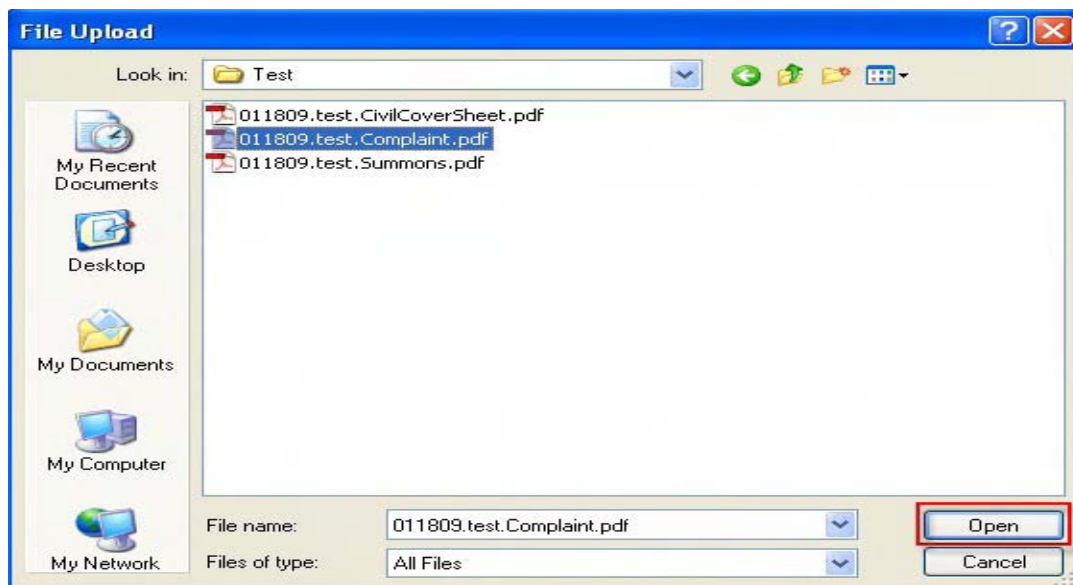


Figure 47

The path to the chosen PDF file will appear in the **Filename** box. Since all new cases should have at least one attachment, the civil cover sheet, change the radio button next to **Attachments to Document** to **Yes**. Click **Next** to continue. See Figure 48.

Select the **pdf** document (for example: C:\199cv501-21.pdf).

Filename

O:\Test\011809.test.Complaint.pdf

Attachments to Document: ☐ No ☒ Yes

Figure 48

Attachments to complaints should always include any exhibits, the civil cover sheet, and if service of the complaint is by summons, a completed summons for each defendant. If service of process is by waiver, pursuant to Rule 4(d) of the F.R.C.P., do not attach summons. This method of service must be stated on the last page of the complaint. Notices of Removal should have as attachments the applicable state court pleadings such as the original petition and any amendments, any service documents, answers, etc., and the civil cover sheet. If you wish to file a Notice of Compliance pursuant to 28:1447(b), you may do so by docketing the event Notice of Compliance located under Notices. See Figure 49.

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Select one or more attachments.

1) Enter the **pdf** document that contains attachment (for example: C:\appendix.pdf).

Filename

2) Before proceeding to step 3, describe the document using the Category list, the Description box, or both.

Category **Description**

3) Add the filename to the list box below. If you have more attachments, go back to Step 1. When the list of filenames is complete, click on the Next button.

Figure 49

For each attachment, you will need to follow the same basic steps: browse to navigate to a previously saved PDF document; view the PDF document to verify it is the correct document; and select the PDF document to make it an attachment. A **category** or a **description** must be entered for each attachment, but don't select both. Click in the **Category** box. If the category from the drop-down list applies, select it. If you do not find a match, enter a description of the attachment in the **Description** field, but don't select both a category and a description. Click **Add to list**. Repeat the process until all attachments have been added. When all of the required documents are attached, click **Next**. See Figure 50.

Select one or more attachments.

1) Enter the pdf document that contains attachment (for example: C:\appendix.pdf).

Filename

Browse...

2) Before proceeding to step 3, describe the document using the Category list, the Description box, or both.

Category

Description

3) Add the filename to the list box below. If you have more attachments, go back to Step 1. When the list of filenames is complete, click on the Next button.

011809.test.CivilCoverSheet.pdf

011809.test.Summons.pdf

Add to List

Remove from List

Next

Figure 50

The case title is displayed. Click **Next** to proceed to pay the filing fee. See Figure 51.

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Next

Clear

Figure 51

G. Paying the Filing Fee

When filing a civil case that requires a filing fee, the online payment feature (**Pay.gov**) of the CM/ECF system is designed so that you are prompted to pay the filing fee with a credit card as part of the process of docketing the initiating document. Each completed online payment automatically inserts the amount of the filing fee and a receipt number into the docket text of the docket entry. The following credit cards are acceptable: Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover, and Diner's Club.

Since the Eastern District of Louisiana requires that payment of the filing fee be made by credit card at the time of electronic filing of a new lawsuit, the default method of payment is **Payment by Credit Card**. However, if electronic payment is not made at this time, one of the following reasons must be selected: case is filed on behalf of the U.S. Government; pursuant to a CJA or FPD appointment; an application to proceed in forma pauperis was granted; a request to proceed in forma pauperis was made but has not yet been ruled upon; the fee was previously paid pursuant to a court order; the case is filed by a Seaman pursuant to 28USC1916; or a credit card is unavailable. To continue the payment process, click **Next**. See Figure 52.

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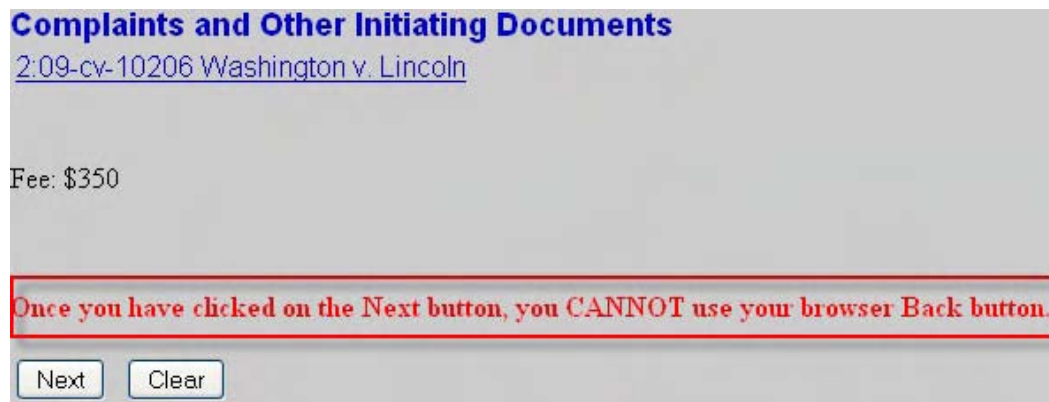
☒ Payment by Credit Card

Electronic payment not made at this time for the following reason

☐ Document filed on behalf of the USA
☐ Document filed pursuant to a CJA or FPD appointment
☐ In Forma Pauperis (status granted)
☐ In Forma Pauperis (status requested)
☐ Fee previously paid
☐ Prepayment of fee not required pursuant to 28 USC 1916
☐ Credit Card not accepted or unavailable (**Fee must be received within 2 business days**)

Figure 52

The amount of the \$350 filing fee is displayed. It is important to know that once you have clicked the **Next** button, you CANNOT use your browser Back button. This is because the **Pay.gov** application, which is outside of the ECF system, begins to load. Have your credit card information ready and click **Next** to proceed. See Figure 53.



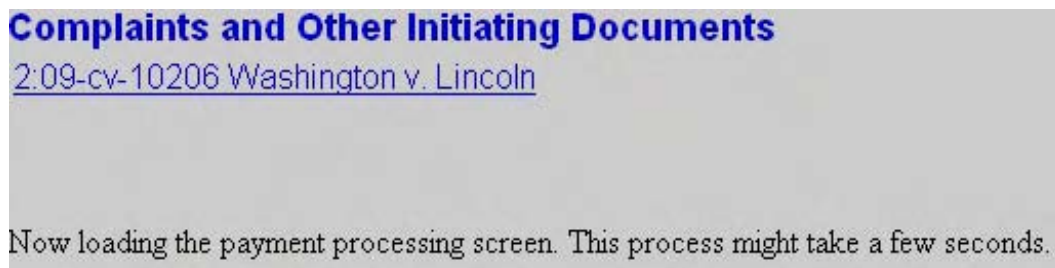
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Fee: \$350

Once you have clicked on the Next button, you CANNOT use your browser Back button.

Figure 53

It will take a few seconds to load the payment process. See Figure 54.



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Now loading the payment processing screen. This process might take a few seconds.

Figure 54

The first of two screens through the **Pay.gov** application appears. All fields with a red asterisk are required. The attorney name and address fields will automatically be populated with the information on file in ECF. You may need to change this information to match the billing address for the credit card you are using. After verifying this information and entering all credit card information, click the **Continue with Plastic Card Payment** button. See Figure 55.

Online Payment

[Return to your originating application](#)

Step 1: Enter Payment Information

1 | 2

Pay Via Plastic Card (PC) (ex: American Express, Diners Club, Discover, Mastercard, VISA)

Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk *

Account Holder Name: attorney *

Payment Amount: \$350.00

Billing Address: 3005 Kingman Ave. *


Billing Address 2:

City:

State / Province:

Zip / Postal Code: 70006

Country: United States *

Card Type: * 

Card Number: * (Card number value should not contain spaces or dashes)

Security Code: * [Help finding your security code](#)

Expiration Date: * / *

Select the "Continue with Plastic Card Payment" button to continue to the next step in the Plastic Card Payment Process.

Continue with Plastic Card Payment

Cancel

Note: Please avoid navigating the site using your browser's Back Button - this may lead to incomplete data being transmitted and pages being loaded incorrectly. Please use the links provided whenever possible.

Figure 55

If you wish to receive an e-mail receipt, enter your e-mail address. To complete the transaction, click the **authorization to charge check box**. When you click **Submit Payment**, your credit card will be charged. Click the **Submit Payment** button to continue. See Figure 56.

Online Payment

Return to your originating application

Step 2: Authorize Payment

1 | 2

Payment Summary

Edit this information

Address Information	Account Information	Payment Information
<div>Account Holder Name: attorney</div> <div>3005 Kingman Ave.</div> <div>Billing Address: Ave.</div> <div>Billing Address 2:</div> <div>City:</div> <div>State / Province:</div> <div>Zip / Postal Code: 70006</div> <div>Country: USA</div>	<div>Card Type: Visa</div> <div>Card Number: *****1111</div>	<div>Payment Amount: \$350.00</div> <div>Transaction Date 08/27/2009 12:51 and Time: EDT</div>

Email Confirmation Receipt

To have a confirmation sent to you upon completion of this transaction, provide an email address and confirmation below.

Email Address:

Confirm Email Address:

CC:

Separate multiple email addresses with a comma

Authorization and Disclosure

Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk *

I authorize a charge to my card account for the above amount in accordance with my card issuer agreement.

☐ *

Press the "Submit Payment" Button only once. Pressing the button more than once could result in multiple transactions.

Submit Payment

Cancel

Note: Please avoid navigating the site using your browser's Back Button - this may lead to incomplete data being transmitted and pages being loaded incorrectly. Please use the links provided whenever possible.

Figure 56

Processing of the electronic payment will take a few seconds. See Figure 57.

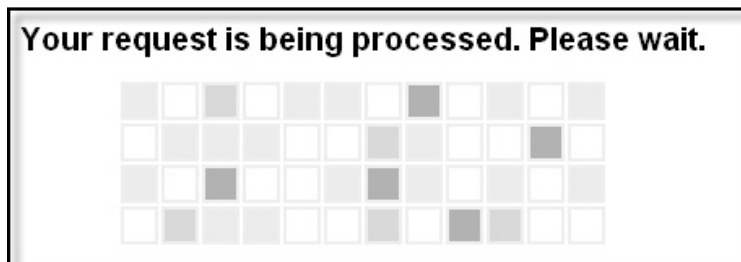
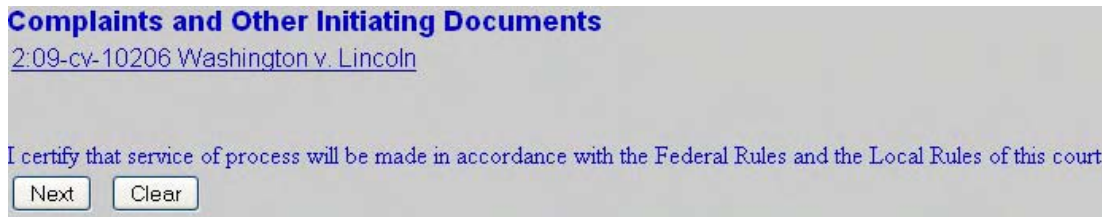


Figure 57

H. Completing the Filing

After completion of the electronic fee payment process by the Pay.gov application, you will be returned back to the ECF system to complete the filing of the complaint or other initiating document. To certify that service of process of this filing will be made in accordance with the Federal Rules and the Local Rules of this court, click the **Next** button. See Figure 58.

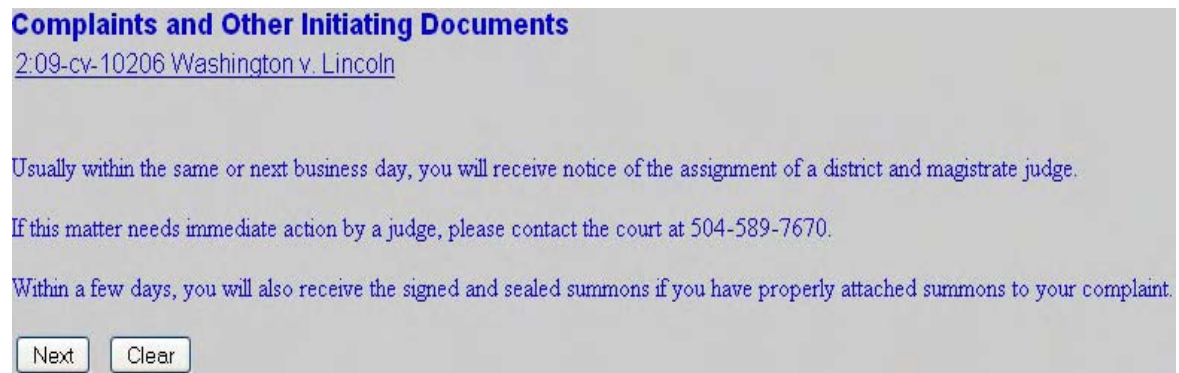


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I certify that service of process will be made in accordance with the Federal Rules and the Local Rules of this court.

Figure 58

The next screen informs you when you will receive notice of the assignment of a district and magistrate judge and issuance of summons, when applicable. Click **Next**. See Figure 59.



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Usually within the same or next business day, you will receive notice of the assignment of a district and magistrate judge.

If this matter needs immediate action by a judge, please contact the court at 504-589-7670.

Within a few days, you will also receive the signed and sealed summons if you have properly attached summons to your complaint.

Figure 59

The case title is displayed. Click **Next**. See Figure 60.



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Figure 60

This is the final confirmation screen before committing the transaction and filing the complaint. The docket text for the complaint is displayed. You may want to note the fee payment receipt number for future reference. When you click the **Next** button, the document will be uploaded and notice will be sent. Click **Next** to complete this filing. See Figure 61.

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Docket Text: Final Text
COMPLAINT against Abraham Lincoln (Filing fee \$ 350 receipt number 053L0000000000170844) filed by Pearl Washington. (Attachments: # (1) Civil Cover Sheet, # (2) Summons)(attorney,)

Attention!! Pressing the NEXT button on this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue.

Source Document Path (for confirmation only):
011809.test.Complaint.pdf pages: 1
011809.test.CivilCoverSheet.pdf pages: 2
011809.test.Summons.pdf pages: 2

Figure 61

This is a notice of electronic filing or NEF, which serves as your confirmation that ECF has registered your transaction and the pleading is now an official document. Only the filing attorney will receive a Notice of Electronic Filing when opening a new case since no other attorneys have been added to the case at this point. The filing attorney is responsible for service on all other parties. You may want to save or print a copy of this screen for your records. To view the docket sheet for this case you may click on the case number hyperlink. See Figure 62.

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U. S. District Court
Eastern District of Louisiana

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was entered by attorney, on 8/27/2009 at 12:26 PM CDT and filed on 8/27/2009

Case Name: Washington v. Lincoln
Case Number: [2:09-cv-10206](#)
Filer: Pearl Washington
Document Number: [1](#)

Docket Text:
COMPLAINT against Abraham Lincoln (Filing fee \$ 350 receipt number 053L0000000000170844) filed by Pearl Washington. (Attachments: # (1) Civil Cover Sheet, # (2) Summons)(attorney,)

Figure 62

I. Determining the Judge Assigned to the Case

After you have successfully opened your case, attached your documents, and paid the filing fee (if applicable), for quality control purposes, the clerk's office will review and modify any selections made by attorneys to accurately reflect the information contained within the filings. After this review, you will receive a separate notice from the court of the assignment of a district judge and magistrate judge to the case. See Figure 63.

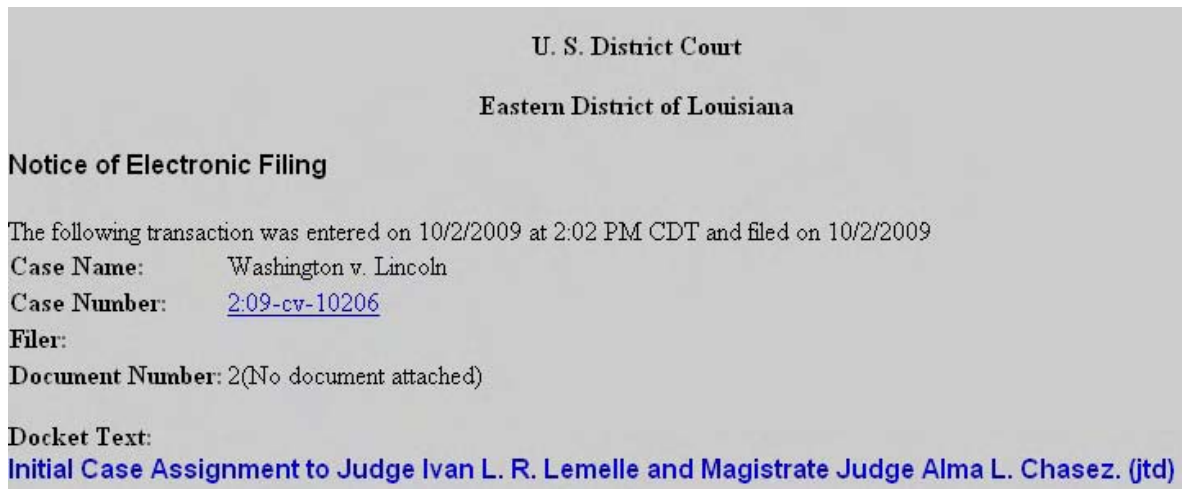


Figure 63

J. Issuance of Summons for Service of Process

If service of the complaint is by summons (not a waiver of service), the summons you attached to the complaint will be electronically signed and sealed by the court. A Notice of Electronic Filing will be sent to you with the link to the signed and sealed summons. Click on the document number hyperlink, print the summons, and then effect service of process pursuant to Rule 4 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. See Figure 64.

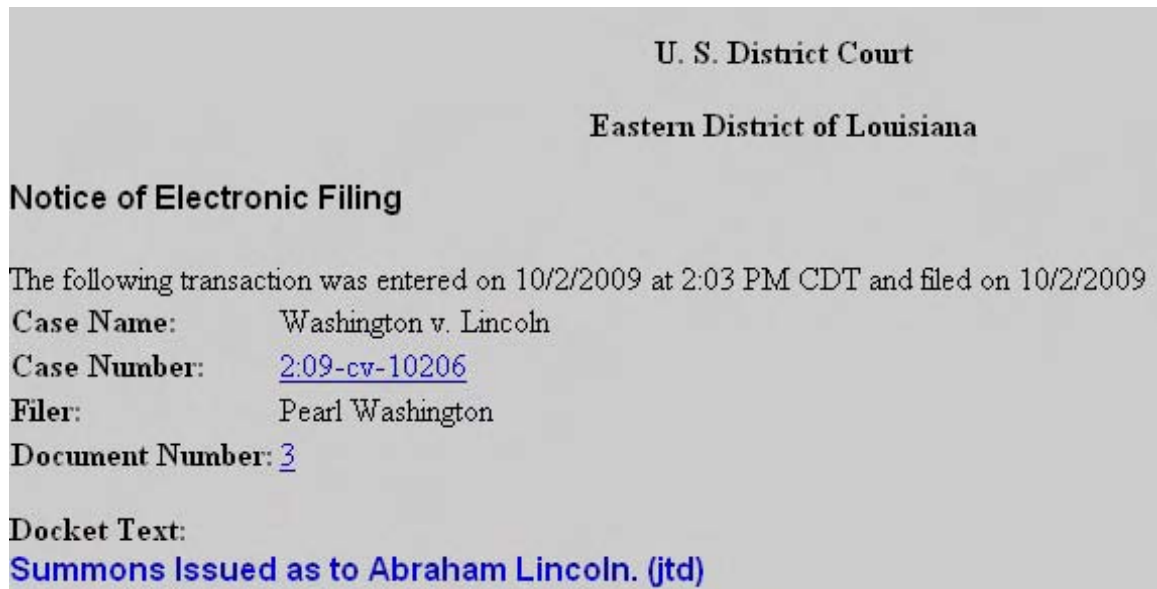


Figure 64